

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 0544

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEC

SUBJEC: EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE: POLITICAL ASPECTS

1. SUMMARY: OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH EC COMMISSION OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE THE ARABS ARE RENEWING PRESSURE ON THE EUROPEANS TO SUPPORT THE ARAB POSITION RE A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, AND HAVE NOT ABANDONED ATTEMPTS TO SUBORDINATE THE DIALOGUE'S ECONOMIC ISSUES TO THIS OVERRIDING ARAB POLITICAL CONCERN. COMMISSION OFFICIALS ARE CONFIDENT EC WILL NOT, IN DEALOGUE'S GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN TUNIS FEBRUARY 10-12, ALLOW ITSELF TO BE PUSHED BEYOND EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS WHICH THE EC MADE IN UNGA LAST FALL. NEVERTHELESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT PRIOR TO JANUARY 25-26 MEETING OF EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS AND JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 1 POLITICAL COOPERATION MEETING OF EC FOREIGN MINISTERS, THE USG REITERATE TO THE U.K. PRESIDENCY OF THE EC, US CONCERN ABOUT POLITICIZING
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THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE AND ABOUT UNCCORDINATED WESTERN INITIATIVES ON THE MIDDLE EAST. END SUMMARY.

2. IN SEPARATE MEETINGS JANUARY 19 WITH KLAUS MEYER, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EC COMMISSION, AND KLAUS EWIG, DIRECTOR FOR MIDDLE EAST IN DG I, MISSION OFFICERS DISCUSSED PREPARATIONS FOR EURO-

ARAB DIALOGUE GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN TUNIS
FEBRUARY 10-12. WHILE THERE WAS SOME DIFFERENCE
OF NUANCE, THEIR COMMENTS GENERALLY WERE COMPLEMENTARY.

3. DIALOGUE'S POLITICAL CONTENT

ACCORDING TO EWIG, THE ARABS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR IN
RECENT PREPARATORY MEETINGS WITH THE COMMISSION,
(AS WELL AS IN THE ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN
CAIRO LAST WEEK-END) THAT, DESPITE EARLIER EC HOPES
THAT THE ARABS WERE BEING BROUGHT ROUND TO FOCUS ON
ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AT THE EXPENSE OF POLITICAL
ISSUES, THE ARABS ARE AS INTERESTED AS EVER IN GIVING
POLITICAL CONTENT TO THE DIALOGUE--PARTICULARLY ON
THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. ARABS
HAVE INDICATED THAT IN TUNIS THEY WILL PRESS FOR EC
SUPPORT FOR A PALESTINE STATE AS PART OF A
SETTLEMENT TO EMERGE FROM A RENEWED GENEVA CONFERENCE.
ALTHOUGH EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS
ARE STILL WORKING ON THE DRAFT, MEYER AND EWIG SAY THAT IN POLITICAL
STATEMENT WHICH EC WILL DELIVER IN TUNIS, COMMUNITY WILL NOT GO
BEYOND STATEMENTS ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS MADE ON BEHALF
OF THE NINE BY VAN DER STOEL AND AMBASSADOR KAUFMAN
AT LAST FALL'S UNGA.

4. ALTHOUGH EC SIDE WILL ATTEMPT TO HOLD ARABS TO
AGENDA FORMULA, WHEREBY EACH SIDE READS POLITICAL
STATEMENT WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING DEBATE, EWIG THOUGHT
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THAT THIS MIGHT BE AS DIFFICULT TO DO AS IT WAS LAST
MAY IN LUXEMBOURG (MEYER HOWEVER, WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT HIS
PRE COOKED AGREEMENT WITH ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL
RIAD TO LIMIT POLITICAL DISCUSSION WOULD STICK).

5. COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION: ALTHOUGH OUR CONTACTS
AT THE EC COMMISSION REFLECT SOME CONFIDENCE ABOUT
THE PROSPECTS FOR KEEPING "POLITICAL" DISCUSSION AT
THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE
WITHIN BOUNDS AND ASSURE US THAT THE EC WILL NOT GO
BEYOND EARLIER FORMULATIONS IN THEIR POLITICAL STATEMENT
ON THE MIDDLE EAST, WE BELIEVE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF
NEW FACTORS IN THE SITUATION WHICH DESERVE FLAGGING.
FIRST, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN
MINISTERS IN THEIR RECENT CAIRO MEETING CAME DOWN
HEAVILY ON THE POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE DIALOGUE
AND AGREED TO PUSH HARDER ON THE EUROPEANS TO SUPPORT
THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND "LIBERATION OF THE OCCUPIED
ARAB LANDS." WHILE SOME OF THIS MAY BE STRICTLY FOR

HOME CONSUMPTION, IT SEEMS A BIT OVER-OPTIMISTIC TO CONCLUDE THAT THE ARABS WILL NOT TRY TO EXPLOIT VERY OPENING DURING THE DIALOGUE TO PRESS THIER CASE WITH THE EUROOPEANS. SECONDLY, WE NOTE THAL THERE ARE NEW SIGNS OF ACTIVISM AMONG A NUMBER OF EC FOREIGN MINISTERS ON THE MIDDLE EAST-- INCLUDING VISITS TO THE AREA BY GENSCHER AND POSSIBLY GUIRINGAUD, AND SOME RATHER REMARKABLE INDICATIONS FROM THE FRENCH (PARIS 1502) OF GERMAN INITIATIVES ON THE EC-NINE MIDDLE EAST DECLARATION AND ON GENEVA.

IT IS A BIT DIFFICULT FOR US HERE TO ASSESS THE SERIOUSNESS OF THESE DIGNALS. ON THE ASSUMPTION, HOWEVER, THAT AT LEAST SOME MEMBERS OF THE NINE MAY THINK THAT THIS IS THE RIGHT MOMENT FOR EUROPEAN INITIATIVES, WE BELIEVE THAT AN EXPRESSION OF PRREPTIVE CAUTION ON OUR PART WOULD BE IN ORDER. SINCE THE UPCOMING MEETING OF THE EC NINE POLITICAL DIRECTORS (JANUARY 25-26) AND THE FOREIGN CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTERS POLITICAL COOPERATION MEETING (JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 1) WILL BE DISCUSSING THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE DIALOGUE, WE SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE THE BETTER PART OF WISDOM, ON THE EVE OF THESE MEETINGS, TO REITERATE TO THE UK PRESIDENCY OUR CONCERN ABOUT POLITICIZING THE DIALOGUE AND ABOUT UNCOORDINATED INITIATIVES ON THE MIDDLE EAST.HINTON

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